

November 30, 2014

Roger Simon on the Ferguson Hall of Shame which include the NY Times, Al Sharpton, and others.

*That the photograph of Walter Duranty — the New York Times Moscow correspondent who deliberately whitewashed Stalin's 1930s forced starvation of millions of Ukrainians and won the Pulitzer for it — still is on the newspaper's wall of fame with their other prize winners is apparently no aberration. The New York Times has no moral center. In fact, it's despicable. On November 24, they published the home address of Officer Darren Wilson.*

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*... But the real top of the Ferguson Hall of Shame goes to the people who brought us Ferguson from the beginning. I mean the real beginning. I mean... what happened to black America in the post-civil rights era? Why has such a wonderful group of people who fought so hard against a racist society and won, who brought so much to American (and world) culture had the guts torn out of their community? Why is what was once one of our most family-oriented groups now virtually without family, seventy percent of their babies born out of wedlock? That was unheard of when I was a young civil rights worker in the sixties. And the endless black on black crime? Where did that come from? What caused that? Forget Brown. Forget Wilson. They're trivial by comparison. Those are the real questions.*

*I submit that some of the answer is above — it's part Al Sharpton (and his ilk) and part the New York Times. When I say the Times, I mean the liberal ideology for which they remain the standard bearer, even in their weakened state. They lead the way for the dependent welfare state that has pushed generation after generation of black people deeper and deeper into self hatred and shame, the inevitable psychological result of the welfare state, culminating on the streets of Ferguson and across the country today. ...*

Ann Coulter has Ferguson thoughts.

*The riot in Ferguson reminds me, I hate criminals, but I hate liberals more. They planned this riot. They stoked the fire, lied about the evidence and produced a made-to-order riot.*

*Every other riot I've ever heard of was touched off by some spontaneous event that exploded into mob violence long before any media trucks arrived. This time, the networks gave us a countdown to the riot, as if it were a Super Bowl kickoff.*

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**Robert Merry** in the National Interest posts on the president's big Ferguson failure.

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*If the latter, then there is no reason to use those events as a springboard for a discussion of American racism. If the former, then there is every reason to use the Ferguson events not only as a broader discussion point, but also to question the entire justice system in Ferguson and St. Louis County.*

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*Obama emphasized that "there's never an excuse for violence, particularly when here are a lot of people of goodwill out there who are willing to work on these issues." Then he added:*

*"On the other hand, those who are only interested in focusing on the violence and just want the problem to go away need to recognize that we do have work to do here and we shouldn't try to paper it over. Whenever we do that, the anger may momentarily subside, but over time, it builds up and America's isn't everything that it could be."*

*That was the crux of the Obama statement. If you don't recognize problems in race relations and if those problems aren't addressed effectively, then black people are going to get angry when events happen such as those in Ferguson, and those angers are going to erupt into violence. Thus did the president seek to put the onus on the country for any violence that erupted in Ferguson. In doing that, he actually placed some of the onus on himself. ...*

**Robert Tracinski** on how the media should not screw up the next Ferguson.

*I hate to say, "I told you so." No, really, I hate it. The city of Ferguson, Missouri, is in flames yet again as angry mobs—largely composed of outside agitators—vent their rage against "the system" after a grand jury refused to indict a white police officer for shooting a young black man. All of that destruction could have been prevented if the media knew its own business and didn't need constant reminders from people like me about how to report on the use of deadly force.*

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**Car and Driver** has the list of cars in the massive 7 million car Takata air bag recall; a few Ford and GM products and lots of Chrysler and Japanese brands.

*The automotive world and beyond is buzzing about the massive airbag recall covering many millions of vehicles in the U.S. from nearly two dozen brands. Here's what you need to know about the problem; which vehicles may have the defective, shrapnel-shooting inflator parts from Japanese supplier Takata; and what to do if your vehicle is one of them.*

*The issue involves defective inflator and propellant devices that may deploy improperly in the event of a crash, shooting metal fragments into vehicle occupants. More than 7 million vehicles are potentially affected in the United States.*

*Initially, only six makes were involved when Takata announced the fault in April 2013, but a Toyota recall in June this year—along with new admissions from Takata that it had little clue as to which cars used its defective inflators, or even what the root cause was—prompted more automakers to issue identical recalls. In July, NHTSA forced additional regional recalls in high-humidity areas including Florida, Hawaii, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to gather removed parts and send them to Takata for review.*

*Another major recall issued on October 20 expanded the affected vehicles across several brands. For its part, Toyota said it would begin to replace defective passenger-side inflators starting October 25; if parts are unavailable, however, it has advised its dealers to disable the airbags and affix "Do Not Sit Here" messages to the dashboard.*

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**Roger L. Simon**

## [The New York Times and Other Members of the Ferguson Hall of Shame](#)

That the photograph of Walter Duranty — the *New York Times* Moscow correspondent who deliberately whitewashed Stalin's 1930s forced starvation of millions of Ukrainians and won the Pulitzer for it — still is on the newspaper's wall of fame with their other prize winners is apparently no aberration. The *New York Times* has no moral center. In fact, it's despicable. On November 24, they published [the home address of Officer Darren Wilson](#).

By now most of America knows who Wilson is — the Ferguson, Missouri, police officer exonerated for the murder of Michael Brown, the supposed 6' 6", three-hundred-pound "gentle giant" who was reportedly on his way to college, but it turns out was holding up convenience stores and trying to grab Wilson's gun and bashing him in the face all while the officer was sitting in his police car. We also all know the reaction of some of the angrier members of the Ferguson community and those omnipresent "outside agitator" dime-store anarchists to the grand jury announcement — cars torched, minority businesses burned down, looting, gunfire, freeways blocked, etc., etc. A lot of out-of-control mayhem from L.A. to NY with racial hatred fanned at every turn. The NYT apparently doesn't give a shit (excuse the French, but it's merited). In the midst of all this, they print Wilson's address. It was to them "all the news that's fit to print." Who cares what might happen to the cop and his family? He's just a cop, after all, and a white one at that. Definitely not a member of the elite — not *bon type*, *bon genre*. (Maybe someone should do a country song — "Two thousand miles from Zabar's.")

So much for that newspaper. They're cancer.

Not quite cancer but pretty bad is Jay Nixon, the governor of Missouri. Not only did he attempt to prejudge the case, calling for Wilson's head like some minor league Robespierre months before there was any evidence, but then, on the night of the grand jury announcement, after having brought in the National Guard, he goes completely AWOL and doesn't use the Guards at all, leaving the poor store owners of Ferguson to fend for themselves, not to mention the police. Everyone got to watch the results on TV.

Peter Kinder, the vice governor of Missouri, wants to know what happened. Why no Guards, when they were all set to go? Did the word come down from the White House or the Department of Justice to keep the Guards out? Nixon didn't answer, just accused Kinder of playing politics. (At least he didn't play the race card, but that would be hard, white man to white man.... although it's possible.) So we don't know... yet.

And then there's Brown's stepfather who looks about five years older than Brown himself and exhorted the crowds to ["Burn the bitch down."](#) Geraldo wants him indicted, which says a lot. To me he's a minor player.

And finally there's the Reverend Al, a character straight out of the pages of Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*. A demagogue with the ear of the president and attorney general, he's no minor player. No wonder he hasn't been collared for the 4.5 million in back taxes his various organizations are said to owe. O'Reilly thinks he's the most hated man in America right now and he may be right. He's certainly in competition with the KKK of old for outright race incitement, although he hasn't gone as far as lynching, unless you count the Tawana Brawley case, which was pretty close to that.

But the real top of the Ferguson Hall of Shame goes to the people who brought us Ferguson from the beginning. I mean the real beginning. I mean... what happened to black America in the post-civil rights era? Why has such a wonderful group of people who fought so hard against a racist society and won, who brought so much to American (and world) culture had the guts torn out of their community? Why is what was once one of our most family-oriented groups now virtually without family, seventy percent of their babies born out of wedlock? That was unheard of when I was a young civil rights worker in the sixties. And the endless black on black crime? Where did that come from? What caused that? Forget Brown. Forget Wilson. They're trivial by comparison. Those are the real questions.

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## Human Events

### [Liberals willing to fight to the last drop of black blood](#)

by Ann Coulter

The riot in Ferguson reminds me, I hate criminals, but I hate liberals more. They planned this riot. They stoked the fire, lied about the evidence and produced a made-to-order riot.

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The reason most grand jury investigations result in an indictment is that most grand juries aren't convened solely to patronize racial mobs. Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon was basically demanding an indictment of Wilson before Big Mike's body was cold. It was only because of racial politics that this shooting wasn't dismissed without a grand jury, at all.

Obama says anger is an “understandable reaction” to the grand jury’s finding. Why? And why — as almost everyone is saying — are we supposed to praise the “peaceful protests”?

There’s nothing to protest! A cop shot a thug who was trying to kill him. The grand jury documents make perfectly clear that Big Mike was entirely responsible for his own death. Can’t the peaceful protesters read?

The night of the riot, Obama said the law “often feels as if it is being applied in discriminatory fashion.” Maybe, but not in this case — except toward Officer Wilson.

I know liberals were hoping they had finally found the great white whale of racism, but they’re just going to have to keep plugging away. They might want to come up with a more productive way to spend their time, inasmuch as they’re about 0:100 on white racism sightings.

Anyone following this case has seen the video of Big Mike robbing a store and roughing up an innocent Pakistani clerk about 10 minutes before being shot by Officer Wilson. They’ve seen him flashing Bloods gang signs in photos.

They know Brown’s mother was recently arrested for clubbing grandma with a pipe over T-shirt proceeds. They’ve seen the video of Brown’s ex-con stepfather shouting at a crowd of protesters after the grand jury’s decision: “Burn this bitch down!”

Liberals will say none of that is relevant in court, but apparently they don’t think actual evidence is relevant either. It’s certainly relevant in the court of public opinion that the alleged victims are a cartoonishly lower-class, periodically criminal black family.

TV hosts narrated the riot by saying it showed “the community” feels it’s not being listened to. Only liberals look at blacks looting and say, *See what white Americans made them do?*

That’s their proof of injustice — look at how blacks are reacting! (While I don’t approve of the looting part, I do approve of the whole throwing-bottles-at-CNN part.)

The looters aren’t the community!

The community doesn’t want black thugs robbing stores and sauntering down the middle of its streets. The community doesn’t want to be assaulted by Big Mike. The community didn’t want its stores burned down.

That community testified in support of Officer Darren Wilson. About a half-dozen black witnesses supported Officer Wilson’s version of what happened. One was a black woman, who saw the shooting from the Canfield Green apartments. Crying on the stand, she said, “I have a child and that could have been my son.”

And yet, she confirmed all crucial parts of Wilson’s account. She said “the child” (292-pound Big Mike) never had his hands up and the cop only fired when “the baby” was coming at him. “Why won’t that boy stop?” she asked her husband.

I always want to know more about the heroic black witnesses. They are put in a position no white person will ever be in and do the right thing by telling the truth — then go into hiding from “the community” being championed by goo-goo liberals.

White people don't feel any obligation to defend some thug just because he's white. Only blacks are expected to lie on behalf of criminals of their own race.

But real heroism doesn't interest liberals. They only ooh-and-ahh over blacks with rap sheets. The only meaningful white racism anymore is the liberal infantilization of black people.

## National Interest

### Obama's Big Ferguson Failure

***"This is precisely what presidents of the United States should not do in such circumstances."***

by Robert Merry

President Obama's [statement issued in the White House pressroom](#) minutes after the announcement of the Ferguson grand jury's decision not to indict officer Darren Wilson wasn't just a botch. It was a tragic botch.

On the surface, the president sought to strike a measured and balanced tone, and he hit many of the right notes in his brief statement—to wit, we are a nation of laws, the decision was the grand jury's to make, there is no excuse for violence, and so on and so forth. But in the course of his remarks, he denied seeking to do what he obviously was doing, which was using those tragic events in Ferguson, Missouri, as a springboard for a broader discussion on lingering problems in American race relations. In doing that, he undermined his own call for calm and negated his suggestion that we should bear in mind that “we are a nation built on the rule of law.”

There are two fundamental prisms through which to view the heart-rending story in Ferguson. The first is that it was a tragic episode in which an unarmed young black man, Michael Brown, lost his life in an altercation with a police officer and that the matter, like all such matters, had to be parsed and adjudicated through the local criminal-justice system. That meant waiting for all evidence to be gathered and weighed before rushing to judgment. It meant further that we ultimately must place our trust in the justice system, which certainly isn't perfect, but it is all we have—and is likely to be carefully pursued particularly when it is under intense and emotional public scrutiny, as it was in Ferguson. Viewed through this prism, there is no call for conflating this delicate and difficult process with any broader national problems in race relations. In fact, it is inappropriately incendiary to do so.

The other prism presents a different picture, one that sees the Ferguson events as a reflection of a serious national problem of white racism within law enforcement and in the criminal-justice system. Viewed through this prism, Michael Brown's death not only should bring an indictment against Darren Wilson, but represented an indictment against elements of American society. The two aren't separable, in this view. Michael Brown didn't get a fair break from the police officer during that altercation, and if Wilson wasn't punished through the criminal-justice system, then that represents automatic evidence of something seriously wrong with the criminal-justice system. This is the underlying view of Reverend Al Sharpton and other agitators who use allegations of racism to whip up emotions in what President Obama calls “communities of color.”

These two views rendered by these two prisms have been clashing in Ferguson since the beginning, and everyone knew that when the grand-jury decision was announced, whatever it might be, that clash was going to become extremely intense. In such circumstances, presidents of

the United States have a fearsome obligation to refrain from saying or doing anything that could intensify the emotions involved.

By conflating the events in Ferguson with ongoing problems of racism in America, Obama embraced the second prism and intensified the emotional situation in Ferguson, irrespective of all the disclaimers he carefully inserted into his statement. This is precisely what presidents of the United States should not do in such circumstances.

One crucial question here is whether Michael Brown's fate was sealed by an underlying problem in American society or was the result, in significant measure, of his own actions. Another is whether the grand-jury decision was further evidence of racist sentiments lingering in the American body politic or a measured, conclusive examination of the evidence.

If the latter, then there is no reason to use those events as a springboard for a discussion of American racism. If the former, then there is every reason to use the Ferguson events not only as a broader discussion point, but also to question the entire justice system in Ferguson and St. Louis County.

That's what Obama did. "We need to recognize," he said, "that this is not just an issue for Ferguson. This is an issue for America." He said the Ferguson events "speak to broader challenges that we face as a nation" and noted "a deep distrust" between law enforcement and communities of color.

Obama emphasized that "there's never an excuse for violence, particularly when there are a lot of people of goodwill out there who are willing to work on these issues." Then he added:

*"On the other hand, those who are only interested in focusing on the violence and just want the problem to go away need to recognize that we do have work to do here and we shouldn't try to paper it over. Whenever we do that, the anger may momentarily subside, but over time, it builds up and America's isn't everything that it could be."*

That was the crux of the Obama statement. If you don't recognize problems in race relations and if those problems aren't addressed effectively, then black people are going to get angry when events happen such as those in Ferguson, and those angers are going to erupt into violence. Thus did the president seek to put the onus on the country for any violence that erupted in Ferguson. In doing that, he actually placed some of the onus on himself.

Two points emerge here: First, since when do law enforcement officials in Ferguson or anywhere else in America need presidential admonitions to refrain from working against their own communities? Second, and more important, you have to wonder where Obama gets his idea that, when riots begin, law enforcement can carefully isolate out the violent ones while benignly countenancing peaceful demonstrations. The lack of realism here is stunning.

Even as the president spoke, the violence in Ferguson was reaching the level of a riot. "I really don't have any hesitation in telling you that I didn't see a lot of peaceful protest out there tonight," [said St. Louis County police chief Jon Belmar](#). At least a dozen buildings were set ablaze, and an estimated 150 gunshots were heard by the time the *New York Times* filed its first story on the violence. The *Times* quoted Tammy Ruffin, 54, a local resident "standing in stinging smoke that swept over her house," as saying, "It's horrible, horrible, horrible, horrible. I knew this was going to happen."

It seems she knew something her president didn't fully comprehend. What he also didn't comprehend was that these incendiary situations out in the country call for caution and restraint on the part of presidents. By conflating events in Ferguson with broader matters of race relations, he attached himself, however unwittingly, to unfolding events in Ferguson.

*Robert W. Merry is political editor of [The National Interest](#) and the author of books on American history and foreign policy. His most recent book is [Where They Stand: The American Presidents in the Eyes of Voters and Historians](#).*

## **The Federalist**

### **[Dear Media: How Not to Screw Up the Next Ferguson](#)**

by Robert Tracinski

I hate to say, "I told you so." No, really, I hate it. The city of Ferguson, Missouri, is in flames yet again as angry mobs—largely composed of outside agitators—vent their rage against "the system" after a grand jury refused to indict a white police officer for shooting a young black man. All of that destruction could have been prevented if the media knew its own business and didn't need constant reminders from people like me about how to report on the use of deadly force.

Specifically, I [warned](#) them about Zimmerman Amnesia, the dogged failure to learn from the media's mistakes in reporting previous cases.

[H]ere we go making all of the same mistakes we made in the George Zimmerman-Trayvon Martin case, where reporters did their usual bang-up job of writing the story first and then gathering the facts—only to see much of the early narrative about the shooting dissolve before the case even reached trial. Everyone was shocked when a supposedly open-and-shut case ended with an acquittal, even though it was clear that many of the details were ambiguous and left room for reasonable doubt. Which made that case little different from hundreds of others involving the use of deadly force....

We ought to know from past experience how horribly inaccurate early reports about violent incidents can be. We ought to know how much can be distorted, misrepresented, and misunderstood by seemingly official or sympathetic sources on all sides, how long it can take for accurate information to come out, and how equivocal the results can be, with the evidence so evenly balanced as to convince partisans on both sides that they are right. But when every new politically charged shooting comes along, we forget what we should have learned, and there we all go, back to making confident pronouncements about who we think did what, who is the villain, and what is the remedy.

That's exactly what happened. The early reports were very clear that Michael Brown was a good, kind-hearted young man bound for college, that the shooting was totally unprovoked, that he was shot multiple times in the back, that he was executed in cold blood. Then the evidence, as it emerged, knocked down each of these claims one by one.

Cases involving the use of force tend to be messy, and getting at the facts is difficult. It requires a lot of sorting of competing claims, cross-examination and confrontation of witnesses, and a thorough review of the physical evidence, which often refutes the eyewitness testimony.

In my initial reaction to this case, I only got one thing wrong. I assumed it would eventually go to trial. Instead, the case collapsed so completely under scrutiny that it never even produced an indictment. Yet what I found interesting about prosecutor Bob McCulloch's [statement](#) is that he emphasized how thorough the grand jury's deliberations were, how he gave them access to all the evidence, how they questioned witnesses, how they were not influenced by press reports, how they deliberated over the case for a long time. This is not the usual purpose of a grand jury. A grand jury is not there to sift through all of the evidence and try the whole case. They're just there to make sure that there is *some* evidence, enough to indicate that there is *probably* a valid case, which can then be allowed to go to trial.

The mainstream media has already convinced millions of people that they just know Darren Wilson is guilty and that the whole justice system is racist and corrupt for refusing to throw him in jail for the rest of his life.

But McCulloch clearly implies that he conducted this grand jury hearing as if it were a full trial. This indicates to me that he knew the case against Darren Wilson was very weak and probably wouldn't make it past the grand jury, and he knew that this would infuriate those who had already convicted Wilson in the court of public opinion. So he made sure that the case did go to trial in its own way. He used the grand jury to create a very thorough record of all the evidence, the kind of record that would emerge from a full trial, and which can now be released to the public.

But much of the damage is already done. The venal, incompetent mainstream media has already convinced millions of people that they just know Darren Wilson is guilty and that the whole justice system is racist and corrupt for refusing to throw him in jail for the rest of his life.

If the media want to do a better job next time—and that's a big "if"—I can offer them five basic rules that they ought to have followed in this case. A lot of small business owners along Florissant Street in Ferguson would be better off if they had.

## **1. It's not a story until there are facts (and claims aren't facts).**

Everyone knows the default mode of the media: figure out the story, then gather the facts. But there is a specific way this happens, a way that these cases get off the ground and gain national attention. It's how reporters and commentators talk themselves into thinking they're "just covering a story" when they're already acting as partisans. How it happens is that they start with *claims*, usually claims made by the family of a young man who has been shot, or by the family's lawyers, or by "community activists."

Media people tell themselves that they are just reporting the claims and not taking sides. But the claims are obviously one-sided and extreme—in this case, the claim that Darren Wilson "executed" Michael Brown in cold blood in the middle of the street while Brown was trying to surrender. And once the claim is picked up and trumpeted around at full volume in the press for a week or two, it becomes the default assumption. It becomes the story everyone thinks they know is true.

But the press has merely repeated someone's claim. It has usually made no effort to validate that claim or check it against independent facts, and usually those facts just aren't available. So the press tells itself it is being neutral when it is actually broadcasting incendiary and totally unverified claims.

Here are a few rules of thumb for future cases.

Friends and family members of the victim are not unbiased sources. This is totally obvious. Of course they're biased toward their loved ones. Parents grieving for their child are not going to go on television and say, "Well, he had it coming." They will not volunteer that their son was troubled or used drugs or was sliding into a life of crime, even if all of those things are true, because that would sound like they are blaming their child for his own death. They are acting out of understandable grief, but it will cause them to make outraged claims about how their boy was "murdered," regardless of the specific facts of the case, which they probably don't even know yet. They are acting based on their feelings, which is understandable—for them, but not for the reporters who uncritically broadcast these claims.

Lawyers and "activists" who claim to represent the family are not just biased. They are inherently suspect, and the press should go into the case assuming that these people are going to lie to them. These could be honest people who are just trying to improve their community. But they could also be self-promoting hucksters who are more than eager to promote a lie if it gets them on TV. See "Sharpton, Alfred."

Eyewitness "testimony" given to the press—i.e., not under oath, with no cross-examination—is meaningless. There is nothing the press loves more than the report of an eyewitness, as given to their own cameras. Unfortunately, this is a great way to pass on totally unreliable information. So the media gave endless play to an initial interview with a friend who said he was present when Michael Brown was shot. The interview was filmed in the office of one of those activist lawyers. Subsequently, every single part of that interview has been [shown to be wrong](#), and the friend rather conspicuously omitted the fact that Brown had robbed a convenience store earlier in the evening.

Read the Ferguson prosecutor's description of how the eyewitness accounts were often flatly contradicted by physical evidence, how the witnesses changed their stories after they were confronted with the facts, and how some of them ended up admitting that their supposed "eyewitness" testimony was actually just hearsay from around the neighborhood. Then remember all of this the next time you want to make a big national news story out of somebody's unverified claims.

Am I saying the press should ignore claims of police misconduct? Not at all. They should treat those initial claims as a good lead, but it's not a real story until they can find objective facts to verify the claims. Which leads me to the second big lesson.

## **2. Forensics is a science.**

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Claims and counterclaims made in the press are not science. Eyewitnesses lie, omit, exaggerate, or misremember. (And yes, that includes police officers.) But analysis of physical evidence *is* a science. So the real, hard, verifiable facts about a shooting begin with the forensics. They begin with the ballistics, the autopsy, and the physical evidence from the scene. In this case, the first two big facts that were released from the forensic examination were an autopsy which showed that Michael Brown was not shot in the back, refuting multiple eyewitness accounts, and evidence of

Brown's blood being found inside Darren Wilson's police cruiser, backing up the officer's claim that Brown attacked him first.

If the media had waited for these actual, verifiable facts to come out, they might have dropped the whole story before it became a national sensation. Because science.

### **3. People are individuals, not symbols.**

People are individuals. Their actions are individual actions. Every case of the use of force is a discrete incident with its own unique facts. It is not an abstract morality tale about racism or poverty or heavy-handed policing.

But of course reporters and commentators had to make this immediately into a "symbol" of race relations in America. They started doing this five seconds after they discovered the story. It is a reflex drummed into them by decades in the media, where every story must be freighted with as much dramatic, life-or-death, world-shaking significance as it can bear, and then some.

Yet once you make this case into a symbol of race relations in America, you make Michael Brown into a symbol of all young black men. And that opens up a whole world of trouble.

If you make Michael Brown into a symbol of all young black men, you cannot let yourselves admit to or report on any negative facts you discover about him, because then those negative things become facts about all young black men. So if you find out that Michael Brown was a thug who roughed up store clerks so he could steal from them—if you actually have [video of him doing it](#)—you can't report that, because then you are saying that all young black men are thugs, which is clearly racist. So you've painted yourself into a corner where reporting the facts makes you racist.

The presumption of innocence exists for a reason. Reasonable doubt exists for a reason. Grand juries exist for a reason.

On the other hand, you have also made Darren Wilson into a symbol of all police officers. This creates an incentive for people to rally to his side because they want to defend the police and law and order. There are a lot of us who remember the crime wave of the 70s and 80s, so we're inclined to cut a little slack to the men on the thin blue line.

Even worse, though, is what you accomplish for those who are inclined to believe Wilson is guilty. Because you've made him into a symbol of the entire system, then if he's guilty, the whole system is corrupt, murderous, and racist and needs to be burned to the ground. So you've just validated the worldview of the Ferguson rioters.

You can avoid both traps just by remembering that individuals are not symbols and that every shooting has its own irreducibly concrete facts and context. If you remember that, you can report the facts freely one way or the other without worrying about whether you are promoting or undermining some larger ideological narrative.

### **4. Legal procedures and privileges exist for a reason.**

The presumption of innocence exists for a reason. Reasonable doubt exists for a reason. Grand juries exist for a reason. You might want to take a few minutes to learn what those reasons are.

When a news anchor says, for example, that the Ferguson grand jury “failed” to produce an indictment, he’s indicating that he thinks the system “failed.” No, they didn’t fail. They succeeded at weighing the evidence and deciding whether the case had grounds to move forward. This procedure exists to prevent prosecutors from ruining a man’s life by putting his person and freedom in jeopardy based on insufficient evidence.

What the media is really complaining about in this case is that the grand jury failed to be a rubber stamp for their own presumptive verdict in the case. It may or may not be true, as the old saw has it, that a prosecutor can get a grand jury to indict a ham sandwich. But the media is incensed that *they* can’t get a grand jury to indict a ham sandwich.

That leads me to the last big lesson.

## **5. You are not the story.**

Call this the Geraldo Rivera Effect. No matter what story Geraldo is reporting on, it’s never really about the story. It’s about how bold and resourceful he is to be reporting on it. You can send him to Afghanistan after September 11, as Fox News unwisely did, and he won’t be reporting to you about the dangerous religious fanatics who gave safe haven to al-Qaeda. No, he’ll report to you about how bold and adventurous he is to be forging his way through the mountains of the Hindu Kush in his flak jacket.

In Ferguson, reporters were falling all over themselves to be social justice warriors (to coin a phrase) who would strike a blow against racism and an unjust system. When they cast themselves in this role, they became partisans who were no longer able to admit facts that run contrary to the partisan narrative. I know it’s a lot less glamorous to give up on being a crusader for social justice and just be a guy who reports the facts. But if you’re in the media, that’s your job.

It’s time to learn all of these lessons before the next contentious shooting, because there *will* be one. In a land of 300 million people, the ordinary course of interactions between public and police will inevitably produce some tragic results. Some of these shootings will turn out to be justified, others won’t. And there is no way of immediately knowing which is which. If the media doesn’t want to be in the position of inciting a riot each time this happens—and again, that’s a big “if”—they need to learn how to do a more responsible job of reporting on the use of force.

I say all of this without much hope that the mainstream media will listen to any of it. It goes against their ideological bias, against their inflated sense of self-regard, and against their short-term economic interests, which favor the person who is first to break the “news” of the latest unverified claim. So I fully expect to be coming back after the next big case, saying “I told you so” again, and running down the same damn list.

Use this instead as a guide for the skeptical reader and viewer, as a way of spotting when you’re being flim-flammed by a premature media frenzy about a sensational case, and to prepare yourself for the inevitable letdown when the facts once again take the air out of the media narrative.

## Car and Driver

### [Massive Takata Airbag Recall: Everything You Need to Know, Including Full List of Affected Vehicles](#)

by Clifford Atiyeh

The automotive world and beyond is buzzing about the massive airbag recall covering many millions of vehicles in the U.S. from nearly two dozen brands. Here's what you need to know about the problem; which vehicles may have the defective, shrapnel-shooting inflator parts from Japanese supplier Takata; and what to do if your vehicle is one of them.

The issue involves defective inflator and propellant devices that may deploy improperly in the event of a crash, shooting metal fragments into vehicle occupants. More than 7 million vehicles are potentially affected in the United States.

Initially, only six makes were involved when Takata announced the fault in April 2013, but a [Toyota recall in June](#) this year—along with new admissions from Takata that it had little clue as to which cars used its defective inflators, or even what the root cause was—prompted [more automakers to issue identical recalls](#). In July, NHTSA forced additional regional recalls in high-humidity areas including Florida, Hawaii, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to gather removed parts and send them to Takata for review.

Another major recall issued on October 20 expanded the affected vehicles across several brands. For its part, Toyota said it would begin to replace defective passenger-side inflators starting October 25; if parts are unavailable, however, [it has advised its dealers](#) to disable the airbags and affix “Do Not Sit Here” messages to the dashboard.

While Toyota says there have been no related injuries or deaths involving its vehicles, a *New York Times* report in September found a total of at least [139 reported injuries across all automakers](#). In particular, there have been at least two deaths and 30 injuries in Honda vehicles. According to the *Times*, Honda and Takata [allegedly have known](#) about the faulty inflators since 2004 but failed to notify NHTSA in previous recall filings (which began in 2008) that the affected airbags had actually ruptured or were linked to injuries and deaths.

Takata first said that propellant chemicals were mishandled and improperly stored during assembly, which supposedly caused the metal airbag inflators to burst open due to excessive pressure inside. In July, the company blamed humid weather and spurred additional recalls.

According to documents reviewed by [Reuters](#), Takata says that rust, bad welds, and even chewing gum dropped into at least one inflator are also at fault. The same documents show that in 2002, Takata's plant in Mexico allowed a defect rate that was “six to eight times above” acceptable limits, or roughly 60 to 80 defective parts for every 1 million airbag inflators shipped. The company's study has yet to reach a final conclusion and report the findings to NHTSA.

**UPDATE 11/7, 9:44 a.m.:** *The New York Times* has published a report suggesting that Takata knew about the airbag issues in 2004, conducting secret tests off work hours to verify the problem. The results confirmed major issues with the inflators, and engineers quickly began researching a solution. But instead of notifying federal safety regulators and moving forward with fixes, Takata executives ordered its engineers to destroy the data and dispose of the physical evidence. This occurred a full four years before Takata publicly acknowledged the problem.

**UPDATE 11/7, 5:29 p.m.:** Two U.S. Senators [have now called for](#) the Department of Justice to open a criminal investigation on this matter. [Takata has stated](#) that “the allegations contained in the [*New York Times*] article are fundamentally inaccurate.” The company went on to state that it “takes very seriously the accusations made in this article and we are cooperating and participating fully with the government investigation now underway.”

Read more about these developments on [this C/D page](#).

**UPDATE 11/13, 11:10 a.m.:** Takata has released a more formal statement saying that the allegations made in [last week’s New York Times article](#) “are fundamentally inaccurate” and that it “unfairly impugned the integrity of Takata and its employees.” The company says (in [this PDF](#)) that there were no tests of “scrapyard airbag inflators” in 2004, that after-hours tests in 2004 “were not ‘secret tests’ . . . [but] were done at the request of NHTSA to address a cushion-tearing issue unrelated to inflator rupturing,” and that it “did not suppress any test results showing cracking or rupturing in the inflators,” whether to automakers such as Honda or to NHTSA.

For [its story about Takata’s statement](#), the *Times* spoke again with one of its two sources for the November 6 article. That anonymous person is quoted as saying: “What Takata says is not true . . . They are trying to switch things around.”

On November 12, [we reported](#) about a change in Takata’s chemical makeup of its airbag propellant, which the company says is unrelated to the ongoing recall situation.

**UPDATE 11/18, 6:10 p.m.:** In light of a recent airbag failure in a 2007 Ford Mustang in North Carolina—which was not part of the original “high-humidity areas” Takata recall—the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is [calling for a nationwide recall](#) of cars equipped with the defective Takata driver’s-side airbags.

**UPDATE 11/20, 5:35 p.m.:** Automakers, officials from Takata, and motorists injured by defective airbags met for a hearing with Congress. NHTSA was accused of not responding quickly enough to the Takata airbag situation, and automakers also took heat for being slow with fixes. As of now, the recalls remain regional, but it seems only a matter of time before they’re blanketed nationwide.

**UPDATE 11/26, 1:00 p.m.:** The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [has formally demanded](#) that Takata push through a nationwide recall of cars equipped with the suspect driver’s-side airbags. Also, [officials in Japan](#) are calling for a recall expansion, after an airbag from an unspecified car not covered by previous recalls ruptured in testing.

### **AFFECTED VEHICLES (total number if known in parentheses):**

**Acura:** 2002–2003 CL and TL; 2003–2006 MDX; 2005 RL

**BMW (627,615):** 2000–2005 3-series sedan and wagon; 2000–2006 3-series coupe and convertible; 2001–2006 M3 coupe and convertible

**Chrysler (371,309, including Dodge):** 2005–2008 Chrysler 300; 2007–2008 Aspen

**Dodge/Ram (371,309, including Chrysler):** 2003–2008 Dodge Ram 1500; 2005–2008 Ram 2500, Dakota, and Durango; 2006–2008 Ram 3500 and 4500; 2008 Ram 5500

**Ford (58,669):** 2004 Ranger; 2005–2006 GT; 2005–2007 Mustang

**Honda (5,051,364, including Acura):** 2001–2007 Accord; 2001–2005 Civic; 2002–2006 CR-V; 2002–2004 Odyssey; 2003–2011 Element; 2003–2007 Pilot; 2006 Ridgeline

**Infiniti:** 2001–2004 Infiniti I30/I35; 2002–2003 Infiniti QX4; 2003–2005 Infiniti FX35/FX45; 2006 Infiniti M35/M45

**Lexus:** 2002–2005 SC430

**Mazda (64,872):** 2003–2007 Mazda 6; 2006–2007 Mazdaspeed 6; 2004–2008 Mazda RX-8; 2004–2005 MPV; 2004 B-series

**Mitsubishi (11,985):** 2004–2005 Lancer; 2006–2007 Raider

**Nissan (717,364, including Infiniti):** 2001–2003 Maxima; 2001–2004 Pathfinder; 2002–2006 Nissan Sentra

**Pontiac:** 2003–2005 Vibe

**Saab:** 2005 9-2X

**Subaru (17,516):** 2003–2005 Baja, Legacy, Outback; 2004–2005 Impreza, Impreza WRX, Impreza WRX STI

**Toyota (877,000, including Lexus and Pontiac Vibe):** 2002–2005 Toyota Corolla and Sequoia; 2003–2005 Matrix, Tundra

*We will update this list as soon as new information is available, but you can access NHTSA's own [running tally of affected vehicles here](#). For further information about your specific vehicle, go to the manufacturer's consumer website or use [NHTSA's VIN-lookup tool](#).*





It's always Israel's fault.